

Appl. No. 09/910,657

Amdt. dated Jan. 11, 2005

Reply to Office Action of Oct. 04, 2004

Docket No. CH9-2000-0004 (246)

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Amendments to the Specification:

Applicants respectfully request that the two paragraphs beginning at page 16, line 8 and ending at page 17, line 17 be replaced with the following two paragraphs:

Yet another pre-processing module 75 is depicted in Figure 6. In this example, the input information 22 is received via an input line 73. A processing unit 70 can be employed which can take information (e.g., segments or words) from the input information 22 and build a context-enhanced database 72. In order to obtain a context-enhanced database 72 with more word entries, a database 76 with meaning variants and a synonym lexicon 77 can be employed. If the input information includes a Word A (e.g., the word "plant"), the processing unit 70 can access the meaning variants database 76 in order to check whether there is more than one meaning for the Word A. In case of the word "plant", for example, the database 76 can include two entries. The first entry (Word A*) can identify the "living plant" and the second entry (Word A**) can identify the "building" or "industrial fabrication plant". Both of these meaning variants (Word A* and Word A**) can be retrieved by the processing unit 70. Other information can be used by the processing unit 70 to identify which of the two variants (Word A* or Word A**) is the one that is actually meant. If the input information contains the sentence "A plant was erected in 1985", for example, then it is clear from the context that the building (Word A**) and not the living object (Word A*) is referenced. The synonym lexicon 77 now delivers synonyms for this second variant (Word A**). This scheme allows the system to avoid misunderstandings due to the misinterpretation of different word variants. It resolves these issues while creating the context-enhanced database 72. The context-enhanced database 72 can be accessible via the interface 74.

The embodiment illustrated in Figure 7 can be more powerful than the previous embodiments, since it employs a meaning extraction system 81 in connection with a

knowledge database 86. The module 85 can include a memory with the input information 22. The processing unit 80 can consult the meaning extraction system in order to get some understanding of what is contained in the input information 22. The meaning extraction system can be a system interacting with a fractal hierarchical knowledge database 86, as for example described and claimed in the European patent application entitled "Processing of textual information and automated apprehension of information", filed on June 2, 1998, Patent No. TW428138 and which is currently assigned to the assignee of the instant patent application. Such a meaning extraction system 81 can understand - at least to some extent - what is meant by the input information 22. It further can extract additional information believed to be associated or related. Thus, the processing unit 80 can build a context-enhanced database 82 that is 'richer' in that it not only contains the words that were found in the input information, but also information that is deemed to be related. The context-enhanced database 82 can be accessible via the interface 84. The input information 22 can be received via an input line 83.